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## Westly Announces Plan to Protect Coast from Destructive Organisms

*Non-native species cost billions, destroys ecosystem*

**SACRAMENTO** – The State Lands Commission today proposed a ban on ships dumping ballast water containing live organisms along the state's coast. This discharge introduces non-native organisms that attack marine ecosystems.

Westly assumed the chairmanship of the commission today.

"The ships arriving on our coast every day are like Trojan Horses. Their holds are filled with organisms that are destroying California's marine ecosystems," Westly said. "This plan will save Californians billions of dollars and protect irreplaceable coastal environments."

"This policy will ensure California is at the forefront of coastal protection as it pertains to ballast water." Lt. Governor and State Lands Commissioner Cruz Bustamante stated. "The move to zero discharges will promote new technologies, while preserving vital ocean ecosystems."

Billions of gallons of ballast water are dumped along California's shores each year. One billion gallons are dumped annually within the San Francisco Bay, where 99 percent of the biomass is non-native. The Asian clam is causing an increase in toxins in the bay's ecosystem and food chain; the Chinese Mitten crab is interfering with fish reproduction; and cholera and other toxic pathogens are putting people who come in contact with the water at risk.

Annual costs to combat the Asian clam nationwide are \$1 billion. Efforts to cope with the Zebra Mussel, which clogs pipes leading to water and power plants, cost \$3.1 billion a year. Non-native aquatic species are all but impossible to eliminate once established, so mitigation costs are ongoing and increasing.

The Commission's proposal would enact the nation's toughest ballast water standards by 2016, with a "zero organism" standard by 2020. Experts see this timeline as aggressive but necessary to prompt the development of new ballast technologies.

Large vessels can carry more than 5 million gallons of ballast water, which help ships maneuver and maintain stability. The water contains billions of organisms native to the sea from where it was drawn. When the water is discharged, those organisms are released into a new ecosystem that may not be able to survive the introduction of the foreign species. Experts say more than 7,000 varieties of organisms are transported around the world by ships every day.

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## **Ballast Water Proposal 222**

“California desperately needs strong controls on ballast water dumping,” said Leo P. O’Brien, Executive Director of Baykeeper, an environmental advocacy organization. “The San Francisco Bay-Delta estuary, in particular, is one of the most invaded estuaries on earth, with a new species establishing itself on average every 14 weeks.

“The Bay and Delta have suffered severe damage at the hands of these invading critters,” O’Brien continued. “The performance standards proposed here are a critical first step toward protecting these waters and California’s economy.”

“Invasive species cause upwards of \$120 billion in damages nationwide each year,” said Linda Sheehan, Executive Director of the California Coastkeeper Alliance. “California stepped up to the plate by being the first state in the nation to place mandatory controls on the discharge of invasive species in ballast water. By approving recommendations for specific ballast water discharge standards, California is poised to lead the nation again in stemming the tide of invasions in our waters.”

California law currently requires vessels arriving from outside the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone to manage their ballast water, but this still allows for the transfer of organisms.

Controller Westly has been at the forefront in the fight against ballast water dumping. He played a key role in a successful 2004 State Lands Commission suit against Carnival Cruise Lines.

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